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Scientific Themes

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STARFINDER COMPATIBLE

Credits

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Introduction

A character theme represents a focus for your character, which may be a result of your background, upbringing, training, or mystic destiny. In the Starfinder Roleplaying Game, you select a character theme at 1st level, gaining special benefits that reflect major aspects of that theme at 1st, 6th, 12th, and 18th levels.

The themes presented in the Starfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook do an admirable job of catering to a wide variety of different character concepts, but many of them are quite broad, and there are a few popular sci-fi character tropes that don't quite seem to fit with any of them. This book, and others in the series, present four new character themes, all of which are tied to a central, flavorful concept.

For this book, we explore a variety of specialized sciences. While science and technology can sometimes be hard to tell apart, especially in settings like Starfinder, where the two look and act in very similar fashions, the advanced, futuristic world of most sci-fi settings is one where science, knowledge, and learning has flourished. Even more so than wizards selecting specialty schools, scientists often come to specialize in a particular field of study, becoming absolute experts at everything relating to their field. This intense focus can lead to both incredibly flavorful characters, and the ability to hone some highly specialized skills that, to the outside observer, can seem quite a bit like magic, but in fact are based on years of intense study and mountains of background technical knowledge.

Astronavigator
To you, the stars are more than just pretty lights in the sky. You can call each of them out by name, and picture in your head how far they are from one another in a three-dimensional map. Further, you know how to find convenient shortcuts in space travel, and are well versed in the dangers found in outer space.

Polymeric Engineer
You have elevated craftsmanship to a science and an art form. A master of the ubiquitous universal polymer base that serves as the foundation of nearly all crafting efforts in the modern world, you are able to coax UPB into exactly the shape you want, working with greater speed and efficiency than other craftsmen.

Theoretical Physicist
The workings of the very universe are your field of study, and you are an expert at complex theoretical physics. Your knowledge of physics allows you to perform some impressive physical feats, and you can even use your knowledge to strip away the magic behind certain spells, simply by explaining away their very existence.

Toxicologist
While others turn their attention outwards to the stars or the laws of the cosmos, your gaze moves downwards, through the ends of the microscope, to diseases and poisons that can lay low even the proudest and mightiest of races. You can identify nearly any poison or disease, are resistant to most of them, and can even craft special genetically-tailored vaccines or poisons to be particularly effective for certain creatures.

Astronavigator +1 Wis

While astronomy was once a somewhat obscure science that seemed to have little practical application in day-to-day life, that all changed once space travel became possible. Most ships these days have someone who is at least passable with astronomy in order to chart their courses, but the fact of the matter is that there is no substitute for a true specialist. You know the stars inside and out, and you know all the myriad ways that they are interconnected, allowing you to chart courts that others wouldn't even dare to dream of.

Theme Knowledge [1st]

You've spent thousands of hours poring over star charts and maps of known space, as well as reading up on all kinds of strange space phenomena. Reduce the DC of all skill checks made to navigate a starship by 5. Piloting is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Piloting checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 Wisdom at character creation.

Shortcut [6th]

You know all the ins and outs of starship travel, including faster ways of reaching just about any destination, by veering off the beaten path and venturing through potentially dangerous territory. But without risk there can be no reward. When plotting a course for a starship, you can make a Piloting check to determine if you know a shortcut to reach that destination. The DC for this check is equal to the normal DC to navigate to that location +5. If you succeed, you are able to plot a course that reduces the necessary travel time by 30%.

However, this course is dangerous, and requires that you successfully navigate some kind of peril, such as flying through space pirate territory, dodging asteroids in an asteroid belt, or weathering a well-known cosmic storm. Typically, the GM will determine an appropriate hazard and inform you of what it is, but sometimes, at the GM's discretion, you may simply know that "many ships that have attempted the route have never been heard from again." If you choose to take the route, you must succeed on a secondary Piloting check, with a DC equal to twice the original DC to plot the course. Success indicates that you navigate the route without being negatively affected by the hazard. Failure indicates that you have an encounter with the hazard, which may delay your trip or have even greater ramifications.

Hazard Expert [12th]

You are an expert on cosmic rays, solar flares, tachyon fields, and all kinds of strange and unusual space phenomena that can cause problems for a starship en route to its destination. As long as you are filling the captain, pilot, or science officer role on a ship, that ship's AC and TL are increased by +2 against any environmental hazards (but not against attacks made by enemy starships or creatures), and all officers on board the ship gain a +2 bonus on all skill checks made to avoid or minimize the effects of such hazards.

Master Navigator [18th]

You find that it is easiest to center your mind and focus when you are immersed in the stars, buried in charts and maps that lay out the cosmos before you. Up to twice per day, you can spend 10 minutes reviewing star charts and maps in order to recover 1 Resolve Point. This doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.

Polymeric Engineer +1 Int

You are an engineer, a craftsman, and a designer all rolled into one, and no one can take the raw potential found in universal polymer base and shape and mold it with the same level of delicacy and skill that you are able to manage. You understand the temperaments of the material far better than dabblers, and can push it to extremes, allowing you to craft things well beyond what you should be able to with your level of training, and doing so more quickly and cheaply than others.

Theme Knowledge [1st]

You are skilled at shaping functional items from raw materials, and can expertly craft things with minimal research and effort. When determining the number of ranks required for you to craft an item, treat the item as though its level were 2 lower than it actually is. Engineering is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Engineering checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 Intelligence at character creation.

Efficient Production [6th]

As an engineer, you value efficiency, and know just how to streamline the crafting process to cut out unnecessary delay. It takes you 25% less time to craft items.

Scavenging Eye [12th]

Just as you are an expert at construction, you also know how so disassemble something in a way that allows you to better make use of its parts. When scavenging parts from similar items to reduce the cost of crafting something, you can get parts worth up to 20% of the scavenged item's value, rather than 10%. This applies only to items that are fully functional and undamaged.

Master Craftsman [18th]

You find a certain clarity while you are crafting, and the very act of making something not only allows you to refocus your mind and hone in on what's truly important, it also fills you with a powerful satisfaction from a job well done. Up to twice per day, when you successfully craft an item, you recover 1 Resolve Point. The time required to do so is included in the time spent crafting the item (and doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points).

Theoretical Physicist +1 Int

You are well-studied in physics, especially theoretical physics and advanced mathematics. You may have studied formally at university or similar setting, and hold a degree—or perhaps even a doctorate or professorship—or you may simply be a savant who became attracted to physics and learned about it in your spare time. Whatever the case, while your topic of study may be somewhat obscure, you are nonetheless able to bring it to bear in a surprisingly wide array of situations.

Theme Knowledge [1st]

You have amassed a wide variety of knowledge relating to all kinds of physical sciences. Reduce the DC for all Physical Science checks made to recall knowledge by 5. Physical Science is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Physical Science checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 Intelligence at character creation.

Mind Over Matter [6th]

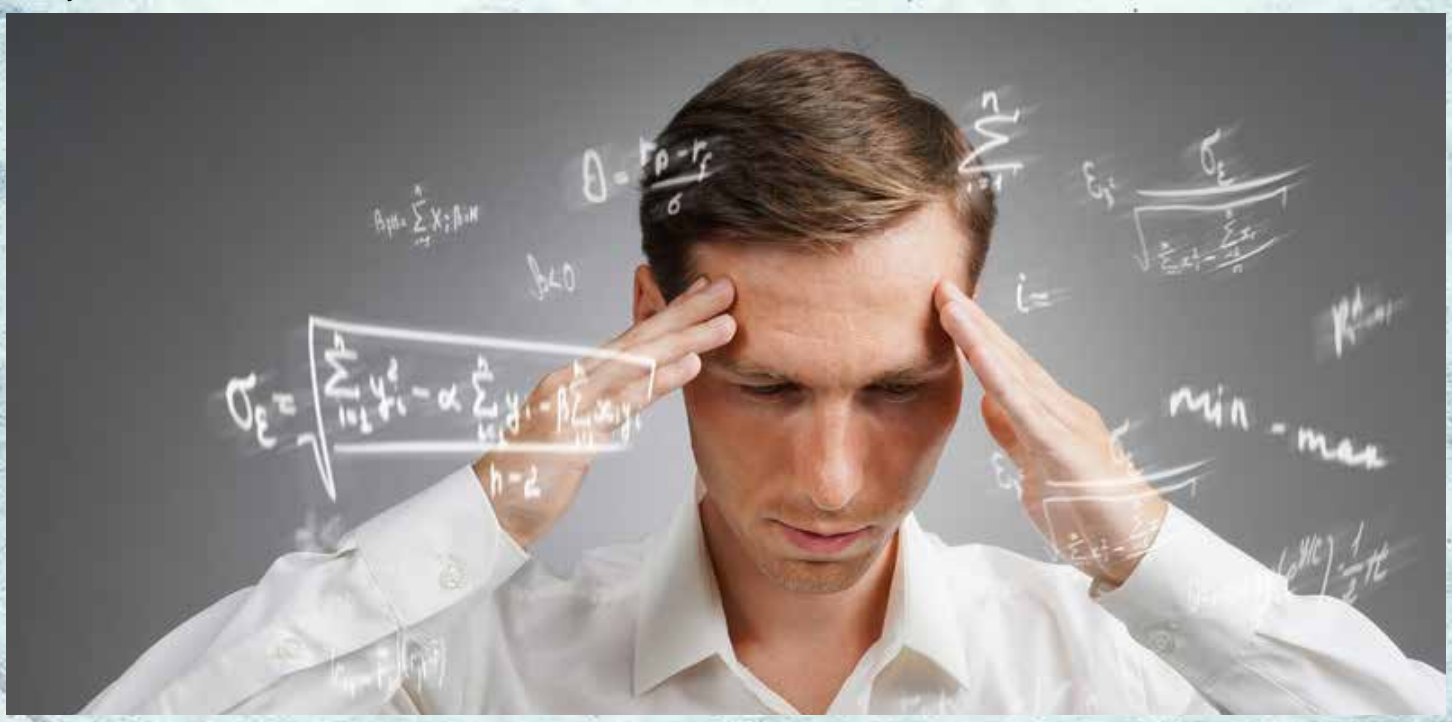
History has proven time and time again that the clever application of physics is far more effective at resolving physical tasks that any amount of brute force. From leverage to flight vectors to numerous other principles of physics, you are able to turn theoretical knowledge into physical results. Once per day, when you make a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution ability check, or a skill check for a skill that uses one of those three ability scores, you can gain a +2 bonus on the check. Alternatively, you can spend 1 Resolve Point in order to gain a bonus equal to your Intelligence bonus, instead. Either way, you must declare that you are using this ability before the roll is made.

Reality Check [12th]

Your incredible knowledge of physics allows you to point out flaws in magical effects with such pinpoint accuracy and mathematical certainty that you can actually interfere with the magic and cause it to fail. You can use this ability once per day, and must expend 1 Resolve Point in order to do so. This functions identically to casting the spell dispel magic, except that this is an extraordinary ability. Your effective caster level for this effect is equal to your character level.

Master Physicist [18th]

By immersing yourself in complex physics equations, and pushing the boundaries of theoretical physics, you are able to find clarity and inspiration, granting you the energy and stamina to continue your adventures. By spending 2 hours engaging in theoretical physics research, you can recover 1 Resolve Point (this does not count as resting to regain Stamina Points). You can use this ability up to twice per day.



Toxicologist

+1 Con

You have studied extensively in the field of toxicology, making you an expert in all things relating to disease and poison. Not only are you highly familiar with the wide catalogue of diseases and poisons that can be found throughout known space—including their symptoms and how to treat them—you are also an expert at crafting and handling diseases and poisons, as well, and have even built up an impressive resistance to a wide variety of them. Whether you use your knowledge to help or to harm, your mastery of afflictions can't be argued with.

Theme Knowledge [1st]

You are an expert at identifying diseases and poisons. You can make a Medicine check when observing a creature afflicted by a disease or poison, or an object that carries a disease or has been poisoned, in order to determine the nature of the disease or poison and its effects. In order to use this ability, you must be aware that the creature or object you're observing is diseased or poisoned. The DC of the skill check is equal to the disease or poison's saving throw DC. Unless you have access to a laboratory with a microscope and other equipment, you suffer a –5 penalty on this check. Medicine is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Medicine checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Constitution at character creation.

Mithridatism [6th]

Your continual exposure to poisons and diseases allows you to slowly build up a tolerance for them, making you more resistant to their effects. You gain a +2 bonus on saving throws made to resist disease and poison. Additionally, once per day, when you fail a saving throw to resist a disease or poison's effects, you can spend 1 Resolve Point in order to immediately reroll. You must declare that you are using this ability before the consequences of the failed roll become known, and you must use the new result, even if it is worse.

Genetic Pathogens [12th]

You are an expert in the field of diseases and poisons, as well as the vaccines and cures that are used to combat them. Given a small amount of genetic material from a particular creature, you can tailor-make a curative to suit their body's exact genetic make-up, rendering it more effective. Whenever you use the Medicine skill to treat a disease or poison, you grant the target a +6 bonus on its next saving throw, rather than the usual +4 bonus.

This same knowledge also allows you to enhance poisons and diseases to make them more effective against creatures of a particular species. Doing so requires that you have some genetic material (blood, hair, scales, etc.) belonging to the type of creature you wish to tailor the disease or poison to, as well as a dose of poison or diseased material, and access to a medical lab. It also requires the expenditure of 100 gp, and 4 hours of work. The resulting disease or poison has its saving throw DC increased by +2 for creatures of the species it is tailored to, but reduced by –2 for all other creatures.

Master of Toxins [18th]

Up to twice per day, when you are subjected to a poison or disease, you recover 1 Resolve Point. This applies whether or not you successfully resist the poison or disease.

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A Scientist is Always Fine!

A spacefarer's life is a difficult one, fraught with danger. She is surrounded by hazardous environments, encounters strange and hostile alien species, and must often make do with outdated, or even glitch, equipment. If one wants to live long adventuring among the stars, it's important to be the best that one can be. The Spacefarer's Digest series contains new player options and content, from character themes and races, to archetypes, feats, spells, and more, allowing every traveler among the stars to reach their maximum potential.

This volume features a collection of new character themes, all of which specialize in a particular scientific field. Included are the astronavigator, who can plot faster and more advantageous courses through space than anyone else, the polymeric engineer, who can more efficiently create advanced equipment, the theoretical physicist, whose understanding of how the universe works can be applied in a number of surprising ways, and the toxicologist, a master of all things poisonous or contagious.

Necromancers of the Northwest

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